

MONUMENT LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL

2009-2010 Performance Analysis

Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?

2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?

STANDARD	The school presents significant concerns in no more than <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement. In addition, if the school presents significant concerns in one area, it has a credible plan for addressing the concern that has been approved by the Mayor’s Office.
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2009-10 Performance: **Approaching Standard**

Monument Lighthouse Charter School (MLCS) has established adequate staffing and systems for managing the school’s finances and regularly meets its reporting deadlines in a timely and accurate manner, but is still improving upon fulfilling its financial reporting requirements.

The school was audited by the Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) covering the timeframe of July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2010. The examination found mismanagement of Title 1 Funds. In the school’s response, the mismanagement of Title 1 funds was noted as well as an explanation of changes implemented by the Indiana Department of Education to make fund distributions more efficient. This finding was not deemed significant. Also, the school’s budget demonstrated large variances with regard to facility debt, facility management, food contract and management, and staffing in the 2009-10 budget cycle demonstrating the school is still working to create adequate projections of revenues and expenditures.

The Mayor’s Office contracts with an independent accounting firm to complete annual financial performance reviews of each school. Based on a review of MLCS’s finances for 2009-10, the Mayor’s Office found that the school successfully achieved a balanced budget with a surplus. Due to mismanagement of grant funds and large variances in the school’s budget, MLCS is approaching standard for this indicator.

2.2. Are the school’s student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?

STANDARD	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student attendance and retention rates are generally at or above the school’s agreed-upon target rates.
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2009-10 Performance: **Meets Standard**

Monument Lighthouse Charter School exceeded its enrollment target for 2009-10. The following chart displays the school's target enrollment compared with its official fall enrollment, as reported by the IDOE.

Year	Target Enrollment	Fall Enrollment	Percent Below
2009-10	510	561	N/A

Source: Official fall enrollment figures from the IDOE. Target enrollment is the maximum capacity from the school's charter agreement with the Mayor's Office, submitted by the school.

The 2009-10 the attendance rate at MLCS was above the averages of both the county and the state.

	MLCS	MC	IN
2009-10 Attendance rate	96.20%	95.70%	95.90%

No targets have been established for student retention rates for MLCS. The school retained only 55% of the students enrolled in the Fall of 2008, excluding those who aged out of the school.

Years	Students Enrolled Initial Year	Students Re-enrolled Following Year	Retention Rate
Fall 2008 to Fall 2009	401	221	55%

Source: Mayor's Office analysis of Student Residence report submitted to the IDOE and the Mayor's Office by the school. Students in the 8th Grade class excluded from analysis. Enrollment numbers differ from official IDOE enrollment figures due to this exclusion.

Based on the 2009-10 performance, MLCS meets the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator because they were fully enrolled and had an attendance rate higher than that of both the state and county.

2.3. Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?	
STANDARD	The Board's membership collectively contributes a broad skill set and fair representation of the community; Board members are knowledgeable about the school; roles and responsibilities of the Board are clearly delineated; Board meetings reflect thoughtful discussion and progress in the consideration of issues; overall, the Board provides consistent and competent stewardship of the school.

2009-10 Performance: **Approaching Standard**

Lighthouse Academies of Indiana (LAI) serves as the governing Board to all five Indiana Lighthouse schools, including Monument Lighthouse Charter School. By-laws were created in 2009-10 to form an LLC Board, to serve as a local Board and provide governance to the two Indianapolis LAI charters. The LLC Board (local Board) was designed to interface with the LAI

Board by having two representatives who would also serve on the LAI Board. However, the charter for MLCS is held by the LAI Board. In 2009-10, a LLC Board was not in place, though recruitment had commenced.

The LAI Board (governing Board) lacked a quorum at a number of Board meetings in 2009-10. Board membership was relatively unstable in 2009-10, as three of the seven members were new. Additionally, three of the seven LAI Board members were also employees of Lighthouse Academies, the school's Education Management Organization (EMO). This relationship leaves the board structurally dependent upon and connected to the EMO, which the Board is tasked with overseeing. Because the LLC board was not in place in 2009-10, true local control or autonomy from the EMO did not exist.

The LAI Board is active in its oversight of MLCS's finances, student performance, facilities, and technology. However, teachers and other stakeholders in the school reported that they are not familiar with, nor do they routinely see, any LAI Board members in the school. The Board does have subcommittees, but they are LAI employee subcommittees, not Board member subcommittees. Therefore, roles and responsibilities of members are not immediately evident.

The LAI board added a few new members in 2009-10 who represent the local community and add to the collective skill set of the Board. However, adequate Board training did not appear to take place for new members in 2009-10. Minutes are clear and well organized.

Based on the performance demonstrated in the 2009-10 academic year, the Board at MLCS is approaching the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator.

2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?	
STANDARD	More than 80% but less than 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.

2009-10 Performance: **Does Not Meet Standard**

In the spring of each year, researchers administer anonymous surveys to parents of students enrolled at Mayor-sponsored charter schools. In 2009-10, only 69% of MLCS parents reported overall satisfaction with the school. According to the data, the school does not meet the Mayor's Office standard for performance for this indicator for the 2009-10 academic year.

2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?	
STANDARD	The school's leadership a) has sufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) has been sufficiently stable over time; c) has clearly defined roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board; d) actively engages in a process of continuous improvement which has led to some mid-course corrections.

2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

The administration at MLCS is strong in its academic and business expertise. The administration includes a principal and instructional leader, as well as a Regional Director (RD) employed by the school's EMO. The RD is an experienced educator with considerable academic expertise. Under the guidance of the RD, the school administration has engaged in a process of continuous improvement. Roles and responsibilities between the RD, who is an employee of the EMO, and the school principal and instructional leader, appear to be clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders. The administrators work closely with the Board to drive school performance.

2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?	
Meets standard	School has clearly met its school-specific organizational goal.

Not applicable. Monument Lighthouse Charter School did not have school-specific organizational and management performance goals that were evaluated in 2009-10.